

JOHN JACOB ASTOR & ASTORIA



John Jacob Astor

Herbert C. Ebeling



John Jacob Astor was born on 17 July 1763 in this little house
His father Johann Jacob Astor had 12 children, born between 1750 and 1778
On 25 June 1888, William Waldorf Astor (1848-1919) bought the building for 7000 Marks
(then registered as Nr. 460 with 453 squaremeters at the corner of Hauptstrasse and Astorgasse)
William Waldorf Astor, Walldorf's honorary citizen, gave it to the City of Walldorf on 22 Dec. 1904
The building was torn down in 1911 to make room for the Astor-Garden; it is now the location of a bank

Herbert C. Ebeling: John Jacob Astor & Astoria
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Preface: John Jacob Astor was an unusual man with special qualities and qualifications. He was known for his industriousness, his persistence and his economizing, paralleled with purposefulness and recklessness. Whatever he did - he was always the right man at the right time in the right place. Astor knew when to get into a business or an adventure - and he knew when to get out of it. Many books have been written about him - some writers researched his life with special care, others never went back to the sources.

This brochure is neither a biography of Astor nor a description of all his activities, especially his real estate business in New York City. Its purpose is to give some background of Astor's home in Walldorf, his family and his youth in the German Palatinate in mid-18th Century and describes his „Astoria-Adventure.“ On the occasion of Astoria's Bicentennial 1811-2011 it might get the reader interested in the history of Astoria and in the life of an extraordinary man, who's expeditions in 1811 set the US-claim to the Pacific Northwest and who's persistence helped to return the Oregon Country to the United States.

Herbert C. Ebeling

Foreword: Johann Jacob Astor is Walldorf's famous son. The son of a poor Walldorf butcher became with 20 million dollar the richest American when he died in 1848. His hometown is known as „Astorstadt Walldorf.“ The words „Astor“ or „Astoria“ are found in many business-names or social, cultural and sport-clubs.

The sister-cityship between Astoria and Walldorf dates back to 1963 and is one of the oldest between an

American and a German community. It was founded on the occasion of Astor's 200th birthday on 17 July 1963. The Charter was signed in Walldorf by Astoria's Mayor Harry M. Steinbock and Walldorf's Mayor Wilhelm Willinger in the presence of Astor's great-great-grandson Gavin Astor, 2nd Baron Astor of Hever, and Kurt Georg Kiesinger, Prime-Minister of the State of Baden-Württemberg. In 1966, Wilhelm Willinger together with Harry M. Steinbock, participated in the inauguration of the Astoria-Megler-Bridge.

Since then, several citizens have visited their sister-city and since 1984, regular student-exchanges have taken place. In 1997, Walldorf's Mayor Dr. Jürgen Criegee (1974-1998) was honored with the title of „Honorary Mayor of Astoria“ by Astoria's City Council.

This brochure has been prepared on occasion of Astoria's Bicentennial and will remember a man, who is responsible for the ties between his hometown in Germany and his trading post in Oregon, which became the oldest American settlement west of the Rockies.

For more than fifteen years, Herbert C. Ebeling has researched Walldorf's history and especially the history of the Astor-Family. He has written several books and more than 50 articles on the Astors, among them some in English. His present brochure „*John Jacob Astor & Astoria*“ is intended to give a short insight in the life of „Walldorf's famous son“ and his relations with Walldorf's sister-city Astoria/Oregon.

Walldorf, August 13, 2011

**Christiane Staab, Mayor of Walldorf
and Chairwoman of the Astor-Foundation**

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Walldorf or Waldorf - when Astor left his hometown in 1779, his Reformed minister Johann Philipp Steiner (1763-1782) spelled the village name with one ‚l‘ (derived from „Wald“ = forest), while the Catholic minister Johann Adam Stumpf (1705-1749) spelled it with double ‚ll‘ (derived from „Wallfahrt“ = pilgrimage), a spelling which is still in use although it has changed several times since Walldorf's first documentation in 1770.

Astor took the spelling with one ‚l‘ with him to America. **Jacob** or **Jakob** - Johann Jacob is an often used double-name by the German Astor-family - the same goes for John Jacob by the Astor-family in America or England. The spelling with ‚c‘ was used in the church records until the end of the 19th century, when Rev. Georg Speyerer changed to the spelling to ‚k‘ in his 1898-testimony on the occasion of Astor's 50th death-memory. Since then Jakob is always written with a ‚k‘

JOHANN JACOB ASTOR – WALLDORF’S „NOBBELE“

“Once you will have a full sack of gold-coins!” The prophesy of an old woman became true for young “Nobbele”, as the little boy supposedly was called in Walldorf. Years later, when John Jacob Astor closed his eyes in 1848 in New York City, he was by far the richest American and could have filled many sacks with gold-coins.

It was on 15 April 1749, when the butcher **Johann Jacob Astor** (7 April 1724 - 18 April 1816) married the Lutheran inkeeper’s-daughter Maria Magdalena vom Berg (20 July 1730 - 1 May 1764) from Ittlingen in Wall-

dorf’s Reformed church. This church was built in 1717 because in 1705, the Reformed congregation had to return their building to the Catholic congregation. After the Protestants built their new Church in 1860, the old building became the local synagogue.

Astor senior was the fifth child of Felix Astor (9 Nov 1693 - 10 Aug 1765) and Eva Dorothea Kreh (26 May 1686 - 21 Feb 1725). Felix was born in neighboring Nussloch, he had 16 more children by his second wife Anna Margaretha und was descendant of religious refugees from northern Italy.

Johann Jacob and Maria Magdalena had six children:

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Peter | 1750-1752 |
| Georg Peter | 1752-1813 (1768 to London) |
| Johann Heinrich | 1754-1833 (1770 to NYC) |
| Catharina | 1757 (married in NYC) |
| Johann Melchior | 1759-1829 (1784 to Neuwied) |
| Johann Jacob | 1763-1848 (1779 London, NYC) |

The oldest son Peter died as baby and was not mentioned in any publication. But there exists very little or practically no information on the children Johann Heinrich (Henry), Catharina and Johann Melchior.

Georg Peter went to London (probably in 1768) and two years later Johann Heinrich (Henry) came to New York as a Hessian soldier. He opened up a butcher’s shop in Fulton-market.

The only Information about Catharina is that she was married to a man named Ehringer. Johann Melchior left

home about 1784 to join the Moravian Church in Neuwied, where he became principal of the church-school. One of his two daughters, Sarah, was mentioned in Astor’s last will. More Information exists of young “Nobbele” because of his later life.

Born on 17 July 1763, he lost his mother only after ten months. Two years later, his father married 24-year-old Christina Barbara Seibold (20 Feb 1742 - 15 Nov 1809) from nearby Wiesloch. “Nobbele” grew up with six step-brothers and sisters:

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Maria Magdalena | 1767-1768 |
| Maria Magdalena | 1868 (married 1795, died >1803) |
| Anna Eva | 1770 (married Corner, died USA) |
| Elisabetha | 1773 (married Wendel, died USA) |
| Sebastian | 1775 (left Walldorf; no Info) |
| Maria Barbara | 1778-1780 |

Rev. Johann Philipp Steiner baptized Nobbele on 19 July 1763 and confirmed him on Eastern 1777 in Walldorf's Reformed church. The boy was highly influenced by Steiner and his teacher Valentin Jeune, who lived in Walldorf from 1741 to 1779. The boy left school after his confirmation and assisted his father in his butcher-business. Johann Jacob, together with Catharina and Melchior and his step-brothers and sisters, grew up under extreme poor circumstances. The little money his father made was spent in local guesthouses, the boys had to carry the meat to the neighboring villages.

Astor probably left home in spring of 1779 at age 15. Brother Henry had sent enthusiastic letters from New York, inviting Melchior to come over. But he preferred to stay home and Johann Jacob wanted to accept the invitation. Because of the American War of Independence (1776-1783) he could not go directly to America and went first to his brother Georg Peter in London, where he learned English and worked in his brother's musical instrument business. In November 1783 Astor boarded the *North Carolina* at Bristol, bound for Baltimore, and reached New York City on 24 March 1784. Here John Jacob, as he called himself now, met brother Henry and his young wife Dorothea.

Nothing is known about the only son of his father's second marriage: Sebastian probably left Walldorf. All people in Walldorf named Astor are descendants of Astor's grandfather Felix (1693-1765), who had been a well-off and influential citizen of the village.



Young Nobbele walks with a basket full of meat through the villages (drawing from 1860)



**The first Astor-Monument, next to Catholic church, was inaugurated on 22 Mai 1898
by Grandduke Friedirch I. of the Grand-Duchy of Baden**



**The second Astor-Monument, in front of the Astor-Haus, was inaugurated on 17 June 1888
by John Jacob Astor VIII, Lord Astor of Hever, and Walldorf's Mayor Dr. Jürgen Criegee**

JOHN JACOB ASTOR: AMERICAN SELFMADEMAN

New York City in 1784

Astor was not yet 21 years old when he arrived in New York City in early 1784. There was no police, no fire department, no streetlamps, no running water, no street cleaning or public transportation. Today's downtown was a landscape with small ponds and trees, farms and church steeples. To get to Brooklyn you had to row over the river. Caused by the fire of 1776, New York's population had dropped to 23,614 - but for young Astor New

York was a cosmopolitan city. New York became his home. Astor was the right man at the right time in the right place. He needed America for self-fulfillment – the young country needed dynamic man like John Jacob Astor, who in 1779 had left his hometown and the poverty of his family to arrive on 24 March 1784 in the *New Country*, as it was called back home. By the end of the century New York's population had doubled to 60,489.

Early Success with Musical Instruments

Astor was welcomed in New York by his brother Henry. Henry, with his young wife Dorothea, stepdaughter of German immigrant butcher John Pessinger, had a butcher shop in Fulton-market. Henry was already well off, investing in real estate. The couple - although childless - did not have room in their little apartment at First and Fisher streets. They found a place for John Jacob with a friend, German-born George Dietrich.

Many stories were told about Astor's first years in New York. One writer copied from another, mere rumors became reality. Not all of them can be true - they would not fit into a logical timetable. Did he really peddle cakes in the streets for George Dietrich? Did he really work for two dollars per week plus free board for furrier Robert Bowne? True is - Astor was a natural talent. He could sell everything. He was an optimist and used all means to build up a working capital. He spent all day in

the harbor and on the marketplaces and learned how to be successful in business. In short time, he sold the musical instruments brought over from London. He returned to England to purchase new instruments for the New York market. On 22 May 1786, he informed the readers of the *New York Packet* about his supply: pianos, spinets, guitars, violins, flutes, music-literature.

Astor did not only buy from his brother in London. Within two years he had his business enlarged to such an extent, that he could compete with established music-firms like Dodd in 66 Queen Street or Wilks in 235 Queen Street. Profits were tremendous. The social elite demanded luxurious instruments from the "old world" and was willing to pay any price. According to New York State records of 28 February 1789, John Jacob Aster [sic] and others "by their feveral petitions to the Legislature preyed to be naturalized."

Marriage with Sarah Todd

Astor's business with musical Instruments was also established in Queen Street. Number 81 was the home of Sarah Todd, the widow of a Scotsman. John Jacob had made the acquaintance of mother and daughter Sarah shortly after his arrival. On 19 September 1785 he married 23-year-old Sarah (1762-1834). In those days, marriages were not only made for love. Nevertheless, when one of his grandchildren asked, why he had married Sarah, who had become a very stern, extreme religious and often sullen old woman, he answered: "Because she was so pretty!"

Nobody would have made a similar compliment about the husband. He was not handsome, his nose was too large, his eyebrows were too heavy, only his thick hair looked attractive. After ten years in American and with \$50,000 in his pockets, he had the famous artist Gilbert Stuart portrait him. Astor did not like the result, but he was rich and influential enough to demand another - a

better looking - portrait. And Stuart delivered.

Besides her looks, Sarah possessed at least three important assets: Brother Adam was a captain; nephew James Whetton was ship-officer and the relatives had important connections to shipping companies. Through the first marriage of Sarah's father existed close relations to the powerful Henry-Brevoort-family und there was also Sarah's dowry, the equivalent of 300 dollar - valuable capital for the new enterprise.

Sarah became an irreplaceable partner in business and family. She took care of the shop, her many relatives and acquaintance fulfilled her social needs, since she saw her husband rarely in 49 years of marriage. He was constantly away traveling through America, Canada or Europe. In later years, Astor had taken his children with him, but Sarah never accompanied him. Even when she died on 27 March 1834, her husband was away, on the ship returning for the last time from Europe.

Five of eight Children survived

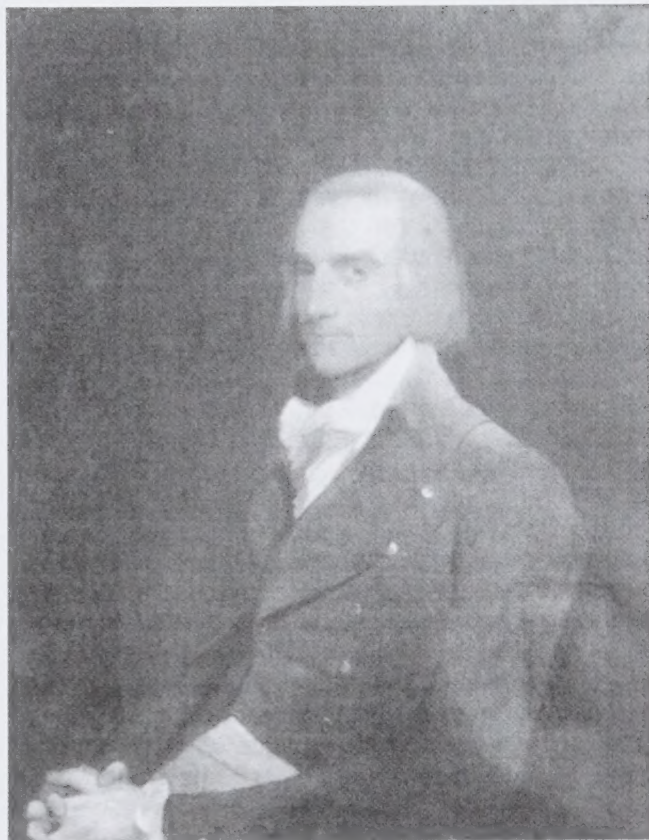
In the same way as his fortune enlarged did the family grow. While Sarah managed the little store on the ground floor of 81 Queen Street, she gave birth to her children in the small rooms above. Five of eight children survived - a good result for those days:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Magdalen | 1788-1832 (twice married) |
| Sarah | 1790-1790 (died in infancy) |
| John Jacob II | 1791-1879 (insane) |
| William Backhouse | 1792-1875 (Astor's heir) |
| Dorothee | 1795-1853 (8 children) |
| Henry | 1797-1799 (died as baby) |

Eliza 1801-1838 (married in Europe)

Son (unnamed) 1802-1802 (died at birth)

Astor's second son William Backhouse was destined to carry on the Astor-name and the family-fortune. He was later known as "Landlord of New York". In 1791 Astor bought his first own house and moved the family into 40 Little Dock Street (later renamed Water Street) and ten years later acquired the larger building 223 Broadway on the corner of Vesey Street and across from City Hall. The only still existing building, where Astor actually lived, is 432 Lafayette Street, built in 1831.



John Jacob Astor portrait by Gilbert Stuart (1794) --- Sarah Todd as young wife

ASTOR'S WORLDWIDE FUR TRADE EMPIRE

John Jacob Astor is the man most closely associated with the American fur trade and his name is a synonym for wealth surpassing imagination. But he became involved in the fur business without ever setting a trap. The many reported stories about him, wandering through the woods and dealing with the Indians, are "only nice stories." Instead, Astor traveled several times to Montreal to acquire furs.

Astor's interests in furs began when he traveled on the *North Carolina* to America. Fur trader Jonas Gallow is supposed to have told him about the lucrative fur trade. His first advertisement in which furs were mentioned appeared on 29 April 1788 in the *New York Paket*: "He also buys and sells for Cash all kinds of Furs," and on 28 October 1788 an advertisement in the *New York Paket* mentioned that he had for sale "a quantity of Canada Furs."

Although Astor's partnership with his longtime friend Peter Smith had been dissolved before 1792, their relationship continued and Smith not only sold furs to Astor but also bought furs on Astor's account. Astor took advantage of the Jay Treaty between Great Britain and the United States in 1794, which opened new markets in Canada and the Great Lakes region. In London, he made a contract with the North West Company of Montreal and Quebec, importing furs from Montreal to New York and ships them to all parts of Europe. By 1800, with a capital of \$250,000, Astor had become one of the leading merchants in the fur trade. He traded furs, teas

and sandalwood with Canton in China and got involved in the Opium-business.

Astor pictured a worldwide fur trade empire. His company would send out one or two ships a year from New York around Cape Horn to Oregon Country, carrying American manufactured goods for trading with the Indians. The beaver and sea otter furs obtained in exchange would not return to New York but shipped from the Pacific Northwest to the Orient to be traded for oriental goods. These would be taken to the marketplaces of Europe and traded for European goods that could be carried back to New York. Astor's fleet of ships would then complete his vision by re-supplying his Pacific Coast posts and the Russian posts in Alaska. To help achieve domination of the Pacific Northwest, he approached the Russian's manager of the Russian-American Company (1799-1818) at New Archangel (Sitka, Alaska) and proposed to Alexander Andrejewitsch Baranow that if they combine forces the British could not maintain posts on the Columbia River system and in New Caledonia (British Columbia). Astor's ships would deliver supplies and trade goods to New Archangel and since Russians were barred from the lucrative fur trade markets in China, his ships would carry Russian furs to China.

However, the US Embargo Act in 1807 disrupted his import-export business. Astor discussed his plans with New York Mayor DeWitt Clinton (1803-1815), nephew of US-Vice President George Clinton (1805-1812).

Seeking the Federal Government's backing for his fur company, Astor met with George Clinton and President Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809). Jefferson, who in 1803 had bought the Louisiana Territory and sent out the Lewis and Clark Expedition, pledged his wholehearted support to the establishment of claims to the Oregon Country. The New York State legislature issued a charter for Astor's new fur company in April of 1808. In order to control fur trading in the Columbia River and Great Lakes areas, he later formed subsidiaries - the Pacific Fur Company and with Canadian partners the South-west Fur Company.

Astor approached the North West Company about the venture, but its partners refused. Aware of Astor's plans, the North West Company sent Simon Frazer to establish a presence on the mouth of the Fraser River and David Thomson to the mouth of the Columbia River. Based on reports of increased North West activity, Astor sought stronger government support. Letters were sent to the Secretary of the Treasury, his long friend Albert Gallatin, which in turn were read to Secretary of War William Eustis (1809-1813) and eventually President James Madison (1809-1817). Nevertheless, Washington officials refused any further support.

Astor's fur trading ventures were disrupted when the British captured his trading posts during the War of 1812. Aside from the premature demise of the Pacific Fur Company, Astor had little cause to regret the war. Because of his Washington-connections, he was able to secure concessions allowing him to continue the fur trade in Canada throughout the war. He bought up Canadian furs at a better price and less risk than London

merchants and made enormous profits from them in New York. Actually these furs were from American property owned in the Northwest at the outbreak of the war. In 1812, Astor amassed \$50,000 worth of raw furs - his poorest year during the war.

Nevertheless, the fur trade continued to be basic to his interests. By the end of the war, the U.S. government was on the brink of bankruptcy. Astor responded. Together with a consortium of associates from Philadelphia, he bought high-interest bonds with debased currency and emerged from the war in far better shape than the Federal Government. He also enlarged his holding of Manhattan real estate, so that by the time of the peace, he was immensely wealthy to take over the whole of the American fur trade.

His business rebounded in 1817 after the U.S. Congress passed a protectionist law that barred foreign traders from U.S. territories, unless they were employed by an American company. Astor bought out the holdings of the Northwest Company inside U.S.-territory for a fraction of its worth. The company was at that time engaged in a struggle with the Hudson's Bay Company and was in no condition to defend itself.

The American Fur Company came to dominate trading in the area around the Great Lakes. In 1822, Astor established the Astor House on Mackinac Island as headquarters for the reorganized American Fur Company, making the island a metropolis of the fur trade. A lengthy description based on documents, diaries etc. was given by Washington Irving in his travelogue *Astoria*. Astor's commercial connections extended over the entire globe; his ships were found in every sea.

AMERICAN FUR COMPANY

John Jacob Astor founded the American Fur Company, chartered on 29 March 1808 by the New York legislature, on 6 April 1808. The company grew to monopolize the fur trade in the United States by 1830, and became one of the largest businesses in the country. The company was one of the first great trusts in American business. It went practically out of business in 1842, when it suspended payments on 6. September.

The American Fur Company (AFC) began in 1808 with fur trading posts in the Midwest and the Great Lakes region, as well as the Pacific Northwest. At that time there existed two Canadian fur companies, the North West Company (\$1.2 million capital) and the Michilimackinac (\$0.8 million). The AFC formed subsidiaries to manage the company's business in these areas. The South West Company handled the Midwestern fur trade, while the Pacific Fur Company dealt with operations in Oregon Country. The early operations of the company were often in competition with the great Canadian and British fur trading companies: the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the North West Company (NWC). During the War of 1812, many of the American Fur Company's trading posts were lost to the British. Those in the Pacific Northwest, including Astoria, were simply sold to the North West Company.

For a time it seemed that the company had been destroyed, but following the war, the United States passed a law excluding foreign traders from operating on U.S. territory. This freed the American Fur Company

from its competition with the Canadian and British companies. It competed fiercely to establish a monopoly for the American Fur Company in the Great Lakes region and the Midwest. In the 1820s, the company expanded its monopoly into the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains. To achieve control of the industry, the company bought out or beat out many smaller competitors. By 1830, the company had nearly complete control of the fur trade in the United States.

The company's time at the top of America's business world was short lived. Sensing the eventual decline of fur's popularity in fashion, John Jacob Astor withdrew from the company in 1834 and sold his interest. The company split up, and the Pacific Fur Company became independent. The Midwestern outfit would continue to be called the American Fur Company, and was now led by Ramsay Crooks. To cut expenses, the company began closing many of its trading posts. Pratte, Chouteau and Company acquired the Western Department of the American Fur Company.

Through the 1830s, competition began to resurface. At the same time, the availability of furs in the Midwest declined. HBC, from its Columbia District headquarters at Fort Vancouver, began the effort to destroy the American fur companies during the late 1830s. By depleting furs in the Snake River country and underselling the American Fur Company at the annual Rocky Mountain Rendezvous, the HBC effectively destroyed American fur trading efforts in the Rocky Mountains. By

the 1840s, silk was replacing fur for hats as the clothing fashion in Europe. The company was unable to cope with all these factors. Despite efforts to increase profits by diversifying into other industries like lead mining, the American Fur Company folded. The assets of the company were split into several smaller operations, most of which failed by the 1850s.

During its heyday, the American Fur Company was one of the largest enterprises in the United States, even holding a total monopoly of the fur trade in the U.S. The company provided the money for the land investments that catapulted John Jacob Astor to the position of the richest man in the world and first multi-millionaire in America.

On the frontier, the American Fur Company opened the way for the settlement and economic development of the Midwestern and Western United States. Mountain men working for the company carved the trails that led settlers into the West. Many cities in the Midwest and West, such as Astoria, Oregon, grew up around American Fur Company trading posts. The American Fur Company played a major role in the development and expansion of the young United States.

Pacific Fur Company

The Pacific Fur Company was founded on 23 June 1810 in New York City. Half the 100 stocks of the company were held by the American Fur Company, which was owned exclusively by John Jacob Astor; 35 of the other half were ascribed to working partners (Alexander McKay, Donald McKenzie, Duncan McDougall, David Stuart, Wilson P. Hunt and Ramsay Crooks each

5, Robert McClelan and Joseph Miller each 2½) and 15 were undistributed, but it was provided that when they were assigned, Astor would nominate four out of five three-share partnerships. Astor was to assume all risk for five years, with profits prorated among the partners. He was to have management of the concern for the first five years. Annual meetings of the partners were to be held at the Columbia River establishment and absent members were to vote by proxy. If the business proved unprofitable, the company could be dissolved by majority vote at any annual meeting.

Five of Astor's nine partners and shareholders had only recently severed connections with the North West Company: Duncan McDougall was a veteran Nor'Wester; Alexander McKay had been clerk with Alexander Mackenzie's expedition to the Pacific in 1793 and a longtime partner in the NWC; Donald Mackenzie, a clerk related to Sir Alexander, and with two brothers and several other relatives associated with the NWC, resigned from its service in 1808; David Stuart was a cousin of John Stuart, who was in charge of the NWC's post in New Caledonia (British Columbia); later David Stuart's nephew Robert Stuart received two shares.

The other four partners were the Canadian Ramsay Crooks and the Americans Robert McClellan and Joseph Miller, who had been associated with Astor's interest in the Wisconsin trade. In 1807, they were trading out of St. Louis, probably with some backing from Astor. Astor's most important partner was Wilson Price Hunt, a merchant from New Jersey and newcomer to St. Louis in 1807, who was possible associ-

ated with Astor before the Pacific Fur Company was organized. Hunt was appointed resident partner with overall command of the Pacific Fur Company; he would lead the westbound overland expedition while Duncan McDougall, who would go on the *Tonquin*, was in charge of the new post until Hunt arrived.

Originally, it was intended that the more experienced Donald McKenzie should share party command with Hunt, but before the expedition left winter quarters on the Missouri, Hunt was given full charge and carried Astor's proxy.

In 1811, the company established trading post at present-day Astoria, Oregon. Astor's grand plan included a permanent American settlement at the mouth of the Columbia River, and a trade ring that included New York, the old Oregon Country, Russian Alaska, Hawaii and China. Indian trade goods would be loaded at New York; produce, provisions (and some Hawaiians) would be taken on at the Hawaiian Islands for the Northwest Coast; furs and pelts would be acquired from the Columbia and Russian Alaska; Canton, China was the best market for furs in those years, and they would be exchanged for porcelain, silk and other cloth, spices, etc., which would then be transported, via Hawaii, back to New York. Two initial expeditions were sent to the Columbia River, one by sea and the other by land.

The sea expedition was to transport furs from the Pacific Fur Company by the ship *Tonquin* under the command of Jonathan Thorn, an impatient and hard man. The *Tonquin* left New York on 8 September 1810 and arrived at the Columbia River on 12 April 1811 to establish the first American-owned outpost on the Pa-

cific Coast, Fort Astoria that was near the Lewis-and-Clark 1805-1806 winter camp of Fort Clatsop at the mouth of the Columbia River. On the way to the Columbia, the *Tonquin* stopped at Hawaii and picked up a number of native Hawaiian laborers called 'kanakas, including *Naukane*.

The *Tonquin* then sailed up the Pacific Coast to trade. The Tla-o-quiz-aht people of Clayoquot Sound near Vancouver Island boarded her. They killed 61 men before the ship was blown up by a surviving crewmember.

Wilson Price Hunt let the Overland Expedition of the Pacific Fur Company, often called the Astor Expedition or the Hunt Party. The party ascended the Missouri River as far as the Arikara villages near present-day Mobridge, South Dakota, then went west onward. They found hard times on the Snake River in southern Idaho, where they lost some goods and most of their food, and were forced to cache the rest of their trade goods and divided into fractions to make their way to the Columbia. Most members of the party reached Fort Astoria in January and February 1812.

After a number of setbacks, the Pacific Fur Company failed when the supply ship *Beaver* was late to arrive at Fort Astoria. In addition, the loss of the *Tonquin* left the post vulnerable. At risk of being captured by the British during the War of 1812, Fort Astoria and all other Pacific Fur Company assets in the Oregon Country were sold to the Montreal-based North West Company in October 1813.

In March 1814, the North West Company's ship *Isaac Todd* arrived, along with a British warship with orders

to destroy any American settlements. Fort Astoria was British and its employees under the protection of the North West Company. The *Isaac Todd* dropped off much needed supplies and offered some personal, many of whom were former employees of the North West Company, comfortable passage back to Montreal and England. Alexander Henry and Donald McTavish, two veteran North West Company employees, who had joined the Pacific Fur Company, drowned when their boat capsized in the Columbia River on the way to the *Isaac Todd*. When Astor withdrew from the American Fur Company in 1834, it split up and the Pacific Fur Company became independent.

Five Astorians chronicled the history of the Pacific Fur Company:

Robert Stuart: *Robert Stuart's Narrative of His Overland Trip Eastward from Astoria in 1812-13* (U of Nebraska Press) 1995

Wilson Price Hunt: *Overland Diary of Wilson Price Hunt* (Oregon Books Society) 1973

Alexander Ross: *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Columbia River ...* (London) 1849

Gabriele Franchère: *Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America* (1851)

Ross Cox: *The Columbia River* (Norman: U of Oklahoma Press) 1957

Exkurs - Fort Okanogan was founded as a fur trade outpost by John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company in 1811. It was built at the confluence of the Okanogan and Columbia Rivers, in what is now Okanogan County, Washington. The fort was the first American-

owned settlement in what is now Washington, although its ownership soon passed to the North West Company when the Pacific Fur Company sold out its assets and posts to its rival.

Originally built for the Pacific Fur Company, the North West Company purchased the fort, along with the rest of the Pacific Fur Company, in 1813. In 1821, the North West Company merged into Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), which took over operation at Fort Okanogan as part of its Columbia District. The fort was an important stop on the York Factory Express trade route to London via Hudson's Bay.

HBC Governor Sir George Simpson commented about Fort Okanogan during his 1841 visit to the Columbia District:

"... is an outpost from the establishment of Thompson's River, maintained more for the purpose of facilitating the transport business of that post and New Caledonia than for trade as there are few or no fur bearing animals in the surrounding country."

In 1846, the Oregon Treaty was ratified, ending the Oregon boundary dispute and the joint-occupation of Oregon Country, though the Hudson's Bay Company was allowed to continue use of the fort. However, due to the decline of the transport business in the area, the HBC abandoned the fort in 1860.

Today, Fort Okanogan State Park (North of Brewster, WA, closed in winter) overlooks the fort site and the Columbia River. Comprising 45-acre (180,000m²), the park is for day use and features the Fort Okanogan Interpretive Center, a museum with exhibits about the fort, area pioneers and the fur trapping industry.

ASTOR'S SEA-EXPEDITION

Built in New York in 1807 by the East River Ship Yard, the *Tonquin* was purchased by John Jacob Astor on 23 August 1810. Astor paid \$37,660 to Fanning & Coles for the 3 masted 96 feet long 290 ton bark that would be used by the Pacific Fur Company of which Astor owned half. He then placed U.S. Navy lieutenant Jonathan Thorn in charge of the 10 gun merchant vessel. On orders of President James Madison the Navy furloughed Thorn, who had been cited by Commodore Stephen Decatur for gallantry under fire at Tripoli.

With the *Tonquin* went the hopes of the new nation along the Atlantic seaboard. The Lewis & Clark Expedition had returned from the western solitudes only four years before. Their startling reports of limitless forests and prairie had been avidly read, but behind them the valiant explorers left no outpost symbolizing American rights to the region. Now the spectacular successful merchant John Jacob Astor had organized the Pacific Fur Company to build a settlement at the mouth of the legendary Columbia River.

New York to the Columbia

On 8 September 1810 ship and crew departed New York harbor bound for the Columbia River in Oregon Country as part of the Astor Sea-Expedition. The frigate *Constitution*, Old Ironsides herself, escorted the *Tonquin* to the open sea. Cargo on board included fur trade goods, seeds, building material for a trading post, tools, and the frame of a schooner to be used on the coastal trade. The Crew consisted of 34 people including the captain, 30 of whom were British subjects. There were four partners of the company: Duncan McDougall, David and Robert Stuart, and Alexander McKay.

Additionally there were 12 clerks and 13 Canadian voyagers plus four tradesmen: Augustus Roussel a blacksmith, Johann Koaster a carpenter, Job Aitkem a boat builder, and George Bell a cooper. (Clerk Gabriel Franchère's account of his journey on the *Tonquin* later formed a large part of his *Narrative of a Voyage to the*

Northwest Coast of America).

The top royals of the *Constitution* had barely disappeared over the horizon when those aboard the *Tonquin* learned what manner of man their captain was. Thorn ordered all lights doused by eight o'clock; he cursed the crew for chanting a ditty and told Alexander McKay he considered him "the most worthless human who ever brocket a sea biscuit" because he demurred at some of the ship's fare. "I fear we are in the hands of a maniac," McKay wrote that night in his journal by the flicker of a candle lit surreptitiously beside his bunk.

On the voyage around South America the vessel put in at the Falkland Islands to make repairs and take on fresh water. Upon leaving Captain Thorn set sail without eight of the crew and only stopped to pick them up after Robert Stuart threatened to shoot Thorn if he did not stop for them, as his uncle David was one of those not

onboard. Thorn's temperament was well known. This incident is vividly described by O. Ned Eddins:

"The *Tonquin* rounded Cape Horn at the tip of South America in December of 1810. Arriving at the Falkland Islands, the ship anchored to take on water and make repairs. Once the repairs were completed, Thorn signaled the men ashore to come aboard. Duncan McDougall and David Stuart with six men were on the south side of the island. When they did not respond, Thorn ordered the crew to set sail. At sight of the ship leaving, the eight men rushed to a small boat and rowed for over three hours trying to catch the *Tonquin*, but Thorn kept the ship on course. Seeing his uncle being left behind, Robert Stuart grabbed a pistol and threatened to blow Captain Thorn's brain all over the deck, if he

did not shorten sail and wait for the boat."

On 25 December, they rounded Cape Horn and sailed North with no civility or conversation between Thorn and the members of the Pacific Fur Company. They were reaching the Hawaiian Islands on 12 February 1811 where they dropped anchor at Kealahou Bay (then known as the "Sandwich Islands" and "Karakakooa"). There they traded for sheep, hogs, goats, poultry, and vegetables. The *Tonquin* also took 12 Native Hawaiians that were recruited for the fur venture before setting sail for the Columbia. One of the Hawaiians, Naukane, was appointed by King Kamehameha I. to oversee the interests of Hawaiian laborers known as kanakas. Naukane was given the name John Cox while on the *Tonquin*. He later joined the North West Company.

Founding of Fort Astoria

On 22 March 1811, the *Tonquin* reached the Columbia River. Here the dangerous Columbia Bar posed a problem of access to the river, so Thorn sent the first mate Ebenezer Fox, John Martin and three others in a boat to attempt to locate the channel. The captain arbitrarily ordered Fox to man the boat with French-Canadian *voyageurs* instead of sailors from the crew. The *voyageurs* had been brought along to paddle canoes on riffle mountain streams. They knew nothing of this churning maelstrom of salt water. Fox appealed to Alexander McKay over the captain's order. "I am to be sent off," he protested, "without seamen, in boisterous weather, and on the most perilous of missions." When McKay remonstrated with him, Thorn shouted: "I command here!"

"Mr. Fox, do not be a coward. Put off!"

However, the small boat was lost. The next day they tried again with William Mumford and four others to sound for the channel, but were unsuccessful and also nearly lost the small craft. A third attempt resulted in locating the channel, but the small boat with Aiken, Stephen Weekes, John Coles and two others sank before returning to the ship. Finally on the 24th the *Tonquin* was able to cross the bar and into the Columbia's estuary where they laid anchor in Baker's Bay and began searching for the lost men. Only Weekes and one other person were found.

The party then proceeded upriver fifteen miles where they began building a fort, a shed, and a small boat where

present day Astoria is located and named it Fort Astoria. Cargo was unloaded and the trading post was built. The ship remained there for 65 days before sailing with a crew of 23 plus a half-native half-British interpreter named Lamazu while construction continued. McKay remained with the ship and James Lewis as clerk. Thorn ordered the ship downriver. There being no place as yet to store trading goods, the greater part of the year's supply remained in the ship's hold.

Battle of Woody Point

In August of 1811, Indians reported that the ship had been destroyed and the crew massacred. Actual details of what happened will probably never be known, but it appears that Jonathan Thorn antagonized the natives, whose reputation for treachery was known, and failed to take proper precautions against them. Nootka Sound is assumed to be the site of the disaster. However, it is more probable that the massacre took place at Newwettee Harbor on the northern tip of Vancouver Island.

The Battle of Woody Point was an incident involving the Tla-o-quiz-aht Nootka Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest. On 14 June 1811, a Nootka chief came aboard the *Tonquin*. While trading with the local inhabitants, Thorn hoped to purchase otter pelts which were offered by the natives. Unsatisfied with the price of the pelts, he tossed the ones he was inspecting back at the chief. This insult let the locals to leave the ship.

That night, a native woman came aboard and warned Thorn that the Nootka were planning to attack the ship the following day to seek revenge. But Thorn did not believe her. Next day a large number of native warriors

On 5 June 1811 the *Tonquin* with a crew of 23 left Fort Astoria and sailed north to trade with the Nootka around Nootka Sound. About two weeks later and off Vancouver Island at a place named Woody Point in Clayoquot Sound, the *Tonquin* proceeded with trade.

Captain Thorn was driven by his desire to trade trinkets for sea otter pelts with a plan bringing the silky furs across the Ocean to eager buyers in China. He would make his fortune.

were spotted on the coast. Alexander McKay reminded Thorn's of an instruction by Astor: "Under no circumstances admit more than a few natives on the ship at a time." Thorn ignored the warning. Not believing the natives being hostile, a large canoe with over twenty native men was allowed to come to the ship. Another canoe of twenty men followed. Under the guise of seeking further trading opportunities, the first twenty boarded with their weapons concealed under their clothing.

Thorn realized the danger his ship was in and gave orders to hoist the anchor and sails. At this moment the Nootka revealed their weapons and began to attack the crewmen. McKay was first to die. An Indian pushed him over the rail into a war canoe, where waiting squaws cruelly killed him with their cooking utensils. Thorn was soon killed too. He fought ferociously in his final few moments of life. This, at last, was the task for which Commodore Decatur had recommended him. Thorn was no merchant captain; he was a fighting man of the U.S. Navy. When he went down beneath a torrent of brown bodies, the deck around him was strewn with

dead Indians. One of the victims, the Captain's clasp-knife buried in his chest, was Shewish, the son of one chief, who had planned the massacre.

The Nootka were armed with knives and some pistols. Immediately the *Tonquin's* crew armed themselves and began to resist the boarders. Eventually the second canoe arrived and another wave of warriors came pouring onto the deck. The crew fell back into the cabins. Close quarters combat ensued until the attacking natives were defeated. Only five of the crew were able to survive this onslaught and eventually drive the attackers from the ship. Four of the remaining men attempted to escape in their own canoe the following day, but three were killed by the Nootka after a gale blew them onto the coastline. After killing the *Tonquin's* crew, the Nootka returned to the *Tonquin* to plunder her.

The only remaining crew member aboard the *Tonquin*, was wounded James Lewis. He reached the power magazine and lit some of the powder. The ship's store of 4½ tons of gunpowder had been ignited. The resulting explosion sank the ship, killing Lewis and dozens of natives that had returned to pillage the ship. Afterwards the remnant of the *Tonquin's* company, left behind at Astoria, decided from vague descriptions of him that this man was James Lewis, the ship's quiet and inconspicuous clerk. But some historians claim, he may have been Stephen Weekes, the *Tonquin's* armorer. The Nootka counted at least 100 dead and many more wounded, some claim 200 dead Indians.

It was Thorn's constant and intolerable disrespect that caused the wreck of the *Tonquin*. The only survivor from the crew was the son of a British sailor, half Chi-

nook and half British, named Lamazee - also known as George Ramsay - who served as a pilot on the ship. "It had all been Captain Thorn's fault. But for Thorn's arrogance, all would have gone well," reported Lamazee in Astoria, who described the tragedy: "The ship was afire from stern to stern. The bay was strewn with wreckage, dead bodies. Those who managed to find a canoe, and so escape, fled from the scene. The ship soon burned to the waterline and appeared to be sinking. The next day, she had disappeared."

Months passed and the isolated settlement at Astoria heard no word of the ship on which they depended for contact with the world and supplies and manufacturing. Rumors drifted along the wooded seacoast of great misery that involved a white man's vessel. Indian camp-fire rumors were notoriously unreliable, but McKay's interpreter Kasiascall had been on shore at Claoquot Sound when the *Tonquin's* magazine was fired. Being a native, he had survived the massacre. Only whites had been slaughtered aboard the ship. Eventually, it was Kasiascall who brought to the lonely outpost of the Pacific Fur Company authentic news of what had befallen Astor's proud ship. Of the *Tonquin's* original company of 53 men, 37 were dead. Gravest of all, one of the missing was Scotsman Alexander McKay, the veteran of the Arctic who had been selected by Astor to found the Pacific Fur Company's trade in skins and metals. Gone were most of the goods and supplies, for Thorn had neglected to unload cargo before sailing the *Tonquin* off to its destruction. Sole succor for the only American settlement on the Pacific Ocean now rested with Astor's overland party led by Wilson Price Hunt.



Fort Astoria – Fur trade post founded by the Astor-Expedition and named on 18 May 1811

ASTORIA: FUR TRADING POST

Fort Astoria was named on 18 May 1811. Two of the notable founders of Fort Astoria were Alexander McKay and Alexander Ross from Canada, who had previously been with the North West Company. McKay died in the Battle of Woody Point in June 1811 and Ross re-joined the North West Company after it acquired Fort Astoria.

The men at the fort differed greatly in background and position and were structured into a corporate hierarchy. The partners of the Pacific Fur Company were at the top, with clerks, craftsmen, hunters, and laborers in descending order. Nationalities included American, French Canadian, Scots, Hawaiian and Indians, including Iroquois and others from Eastern Canada. They found life quite monotonous, with the fish and vegetable diet boring; venereal diseases were problematic.

On 15 June, two unusual visitors arrived: The Two-Spirit woman Kauxuma Nupika (Man-like Woman of *Bowdash*) and her wife, both of the *Kootenai*-Indians. The Astorian leaders suspected them as being spies for the North West Company, but welcomed their detailed geographical knowledge.

In 1811, British Explorer David Thomson navigated the entire length of the Columbia River. At the junction of the Columbia and Snake Rivers, he stopped and planted a pole with a note on it: "Known hereby that this country is claimed by Great Britain as part of its territories and that the N. W. Company of Merchants from Canada do hereby intent to erect a factory." The party reached the mouth of the Columbia on 15 July 1811,

three months after the arrival of the *Tonquin*.

Thompson believed that the North West Company held a one-third partnership with the Pacific Fur Company (which Astor had offered the NWC in 1808) and did not know that the deal fell through, but the Astorians did not inform him about the situation. After a week at Fort Astoria as guest of Duncan McDougall, Thompson went back up the Columbia with David Stuart, Alexander Ross, and seven Astorians. Leaving the Astorians on 31 July, Thompson continued up the Columbia.

By the time the Overland-Expedition under command of Wilson Price Hunt had arrived in January/February of 1812, the remaining men of the Sea-Expedition had constructed a trading store, blacksmith' shop, a house, and storage shed for pelts acquired from trapping or trading with the local Indians. Types of fur taken at the fort included beaver, sea otter, squirrel and red fox. The traders arranged cannons around the perimeter for defense. The post was to serve as an administrative center for various satellite forts such as Fort Okanogan. David Stuart and John Clarke returned to Astoria in June 1813 with 140 packs of furs, which were obtained, from two years of trading at the Okanogan posts and one year at Spokane Post (Franchère).

Astoria "sold" to the British

On 7 October John McTavish arrived with 70 trappers and brought a letter from Angus Shaw, a North West partner, saying that the *Isaac Todd* would soon arrive

with orders to seize Astoria. McTavish was not threatening to destroy the settlement, but offering to buy its stock of goods and furs. McTavish and McDougall started negotiations to sell Astoria to the North West Company. McDougall and Mackenzie were for selling out. Clarke and Stuart disagreed. McDougall was without news and reinforcement from Astor and without news from Hunt. In the absence of Hunt, who had left in August 1812, McDougall's powers were limited and specific and did not include permission to sell Astoria.

The transaction and price were agreed on by 16 October 1813, but McTavish put off signing in hopes the British war ship would arrive and take possession of Fort Astoria. When McDougall threatened to cut off McTavish's food supply, the agreement was finally signed on 12 November.

McDougall and the partners sold the fort's stores, guns, and furs to the North West Company for the best price they could get: thirty cents on the dollar. The Americans and a number of the Canadians viewed the sale with shame and resentment. They found McTavish's warning of naval action a ruse or an empty threat. Surely the Royal Navy would not open fire on a post that belonged to British subjects. According to Ross, the total payment amounted to 80,500 dollars; however according to Franchère, Astor claimed that McDougall had sold the entire property for about 58,000, minus men's wages. Astor considered the property worth 200,000 dollars.

On 30 November 1813, British war ship *Rancoon* arrived on the Columbia and would have captured Astoria as a prize of war had it not been sold. However, Captain William Black took formal possession of Fort As-

toria declaring it was a conquest of war and renamed it Fort George, which soon became the center of NWC operations in the region, where the company had no competition for the land-based fur trade. It became an important port-of-call for the maritime fur trade. Most of the Astor-employees joined the North West Company, including Duncan McDougall and Donald Mackenzie.

Astoria returned to the United States

Astoria (Fort George) was returned to the United States in 1818. Complications of the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812, resulted in an odd scenario: a fort never conquered was returned as booty-of-war.

The British operated Fort George until the mid-1830s. Fort George remained a North West post until the 1821 merger of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies. It was used as the Hudson's Bay Company headquarters and main depot until Fort Vancouver was built in 1825 across the Columbia from the mouth of the Willamette River. Fort George was practically abandoned from 1825 to 1829, when the Hudson's Bay Company reoccupied it on a small scale from 1830 to 1848. During this time, the fort became the center of the Hudson's Bay Company's emerging salmon fishery. The HBC used the salmon to feed its town employees, as well as exporting to the Hawaiian Islands market.

The post finally became U.S. territory only after the Oregon Treaty of 15 June 1846 ended the Oregon Boundary Dispute. Great Britain ceded its territorial rights south of the 49th parallel. The Hudson's Bay Company gave up its possessions in the region, though the treaty had guaranteed their continued existence.

ASTOR'S OVERLAND-EXPEDITION

The Astor-Expedition of 1810-1812 was the second overland expedition from St. Louis, Missouri to the mouth of the Columbia River after the Corps of Discovery led by Lewis and Clark 1804-1806. The Expedition was named after John Jacob Astor, but it is often also referred to as the "Hunt Expedition" since Wilson (or William) Price Hunt (20 March 1782 - 13 April 1842), a St. Louis businessman without outback experience, was in charge of the group. He was assisted by Ramsay Crooks. Actually, it was the Overland Expedition of the Pacific Fur Company and its members were commonly called "Overland Astorians" or "Astorians". Hunt used information supplied by the Lewis and Clark Expedition to lead the portion of the Astor Expedition that traveled to Oregon by land.

The trip from St. Louis to Fort Astoria took 340 days. According to his own account, Hunt traveled 2,073 miles from a village of the Aricaras, in present-day South Dakota, to the end of the journey (18 Jan. to 15 Feb. 1812). The Hunt-(main)-party reached the mouth of the Columbia River in February 1812 and arrived at Fort Astoria on 15 February. Only 45 of the original 60 members of the overland-expedition made it to Fort Astoria.

Hunt left Astoria via ship on 4 August 1812. A return expedition was led by Robert Stuart, who discovered the South Pass, key feature of the future Oregon Trail. Ramsey Cooks (1787-1859) had come to Canada from Scotland in 1803 working in a trading post on the Great

Lakes. He assisted Hunt to organize and lead the overland trip to Astoria as a partner in the Pacific Fur Company. He became general manager of the American Fur Company in 1817 and its resident from 1834-1859.

New route to the Northwest

Hunt had difficulty finding qualified men at Mackinaw and St. Louis, finding most to be "drinking in the morning, drunk at noon and dead drunk at night." Having finally assembled a party, Hunt started his expedition just before the winter as he left St. Louis on 21 October 1810. The expedition traveled 450 miles up the Missouri River before setting up winter camp on Nodaway Island, Missouri, arriving there on 16 November 1810. They departed on 22 April 1811. The party included a woman, Marie Dorion, an Iowan Indian and wife of Pierre Dorion, and their two sons.

When the party encountered the Snake River, they abandoned their horses and attempted to travel downstream. After nine days of successful travel, they lost a man and two canoes in the rapids, and reconsidered their plan. They divided into three parties - two of explorers and one of trappers - and took different routes to approach the mouth of the Columbia.

- 1) The group led by Donald McKenzie traveled generally north and made its way via the lower Snake River and Columbia to reach Fort Astoria in January 1812.
- 2) The parties led by Wilson Price Hunt and Ramsey Crooks traveled on opposite side of the Snake River

until they met each other again near the upper end of Hells Canyon. The remnants reunited and were later guided west by Indians to reach the Columbia River near Umatilla, and then down the river to Fort Astoria, arriving there in February 1812.

3) Several men had been detached from the main party back in Wyoming and at Henry's Fort in Idaho to trap. Additionally, Ramsey Crooks and John Day, with four Canadians, were left behind by the party near present-day Weiser, Idaho as the party worked its way into the Columbia Basin.

Crooks and Day were the last stragglers of the original party to reach Fort Astoria in April 1812 (other sources say 11 May) after falling in with David Stuart, who had arrived by ship and ventured up the Columbia to establish a trading post on the Okanogan River, and was returning to Fort Astoria.

Eddins in his article "Astorians Across the Rocky Mountains" tells it differently:

"Ramsey Crooks and John Day reached the banks of the Umatilla River and followed it to the Columbia River. A fur trading party of Astorians on their way back to Fort Astoria found them on the Columbia in early May. Both men were practically naked and starving. The last two stragglers of the west-bound Astorians reached Fort Astoria on May 14th, 1812."

Return from Astoria to St. Louis

The return-party to St. Louis was led by Robert Stuart (1785-1848), the son of Charles Stuart, one of Astor's partners, who was one of the North West Company

men enlisted by Astor to help him found his intended fur empire. Robert Stuart sailed with his uncle David Stuart on the *Tonquin* on its voyage around Cape Horn to found Fort Astoria. Because he accompanied the overland expedition starting in June 1812 from Astoria, Stuart is credited as an explorer who was one of those who effectively blazed the Oregon Trail, though his achievement was not recognized until much later. His journal is a detailed account of his wintertime trip from Fort Astoria to St. Louis. See: *Robert Stuart's Narrative of His Overland Trip Eastward from Astoria in 1812-13* (U of Nebraska Press) 1995. Washington Irving's *Astoria* (1836) is said to be based on his journal. The Robert-Stuart-House is one of 14 historic buildings in Fort Mackinac.

Arriving at St. Louis on 30 April 1813 after leaving Fort Astoria in June of 1812, the Robert Stuart party with Ramsey Crooks, Benjamin Jones, Francois LeClerk, André Valle and Robert McClellan had traveled close to 3,800 miles "a little before sunset we reached the Town of Saint Louis all in the most perfect health after a voyage of ten months from Astoria." Robert Stuart left St. Louis on 16 May and met with Astor on 23 June 1813, one year and 25 days after leaving Fort Astoria. In a letter of 13 July, Astor stated: "Mr. Stuart arrived here 14 days ago and the account he gives is satisfactory."

After the war Stuart continued in Astor's employ as head of the American Fur Company's *Northern Department* based on Mackinac Island in Michigan. He was Treasurer of the State of Michigan 1840-1841 and died on 28 October 1848 and buried in Detroit.



Astor's Land-Expedition from St. Louis to Astoria 1810-1811, led by Wilson Price Hunt

OREGON TREATY OF 1846

President Thomas Jefferson once described Astoria as "the germ of a great, free and independent empire." Jefferson believed that the entire American claim to the lands west of the Rockies rested on "Astor's settlement near the mouth of the Columbia." John Quincy Adams agreed. The expansionist-minded secretary of state labeled the entire Northwest as "the empire of America." (Ronda xii)

The Oregon Treaty, signed on 15 June 1846, between the United Kingdom and the United States ended the Oregon Boundary Dispute by settling competing American and British claims to the Oregon Country, which had been jointly occupied by both Britain and U.S. since the Treaty of 1818. The Treaty of Ghent in 1814 had restored all captured territories in the War of 1812 to the previous owners, but the question with Fort Astoria became, was it sold or was it captured?

The haggling and bickering over the fate of Astoria dragged on until 8 October 1818, when boundary between the United States and British North America was set along the 49th parallel from Minnesota to the "Stony Mountains" (Rocky Mountains). The West of the mountains was known to the Americans as Oregon Country and to the British as Columbia Department of the Hudson's Bay Company. The treaty provided for joint control of that land for ten years. Both countries could claim land and both were guaranteed free navigation throughout.

On 8 October 1818, Fort George (Fort Astoria) was

returned to the United States; the American flag once again flew over Fort Astoria. The Oregon Country was now under an agreement of joint occupancy between the British and Americans. When news of the Joint Occupation Agreement of 1818 reached Astor, he complained to his friend Albert Gallatin that his interest had been shamefully neglected (Ronda).

After the British rejected President James K. Polk's offer to settle the boundary at the 49th parallel, Democratic expansionists militantly called for the annexation the entire region up to Parallel 54°40' north, the southern limit of Russian America as established by parallel treaties between the Russian Empire and the US (1824) and Britain (1825).

USA-British Boundary on the 49th Parallel

The Oregon Treaty, signed on 15 June 1846 by US-Secretary of State James Buchanan and Richard Pakenham, British envoy to the USA (1843-1847) and member of the Privy Council of the United Kingdom for Queen Victoria, set the U.S. and British North American border at the 49th parallel with the exception of Vancouver Island, which was retained entirely by the British. The U.S. portion of the region was organized as Oregon Territory on 14 August 1848, with Washington Territory being formed from it in 1853. The British portion became in 1858 the Colony of British Columbia, which joined Canada in 1871 - thus the 49th parallel became the US-Canadian border.

FROM FORT ASTORIA TO CITY OF ASTORIA

The British had operated Fort George until the mid-1830s, when its name returned to Fort Astoria. The post finally became U.S. territory when the Oregon Treaty of 15 June 1846 ended the Oregon Boundary Dispute and Great Britain ceded its territorial rights south of the 49th parallel. But in the meantime, westward migration had started. Fort Astoria became Astoria, which was incorporated in 1856.

Although Fort Astoria was founded in 1811, the history of the town of Astoria and its settlement began a quarter of a century later in the 1840s. One of the first pioneers arriving in Oregon was Rev. John H. Frost, who sailed into Astoria on the *Lausanne*. Salomon H. Smith had first arrived in the 1830s at Fort Vancouver; with his wife Celiast, daughter of Clatsop Chief Cowobay. Smith settled in 1840 in Clatsop Plains and established one of the first general stores in the area. In 1843, three men with land claims filed in Washington D.C. arrived at Astoria: John McClure claimed the land from present-day 1st to 13th streets, John Shively from 13th to 32nd streets, and A. E. Wilson east from 32nd.

On his way back from Astoria to St. Louis in 1812, Robert Stuart had discovered South Pass, a 20-mile gap in the Rocky Mountains, a passage that was accessible to wagon trains. The first wagon trains were organized in Independence, Missouri in 1841. The 4-to-6-months journey spanned over half the continent as the wagon trail led about 2,000 miles through territories and land that later became six states: Missouri, Kan-

sas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho and Oregon. "More than 3000 traveled overland to Oregon in 1845 and an estimated 53,000 settlers came to Oregon between 1840 and 1860" (Leedom, p. 34).

In 1847, John Shively opened the first U.S. post office in Astoria; in 1849, when Adam Van Dusen opened his first general store in Astoria, President Polk appointed John Adair, first customs agent on the Pacific Coast with his jurisdiction the San Francisco area during his first six months. The population grew constantly. On 22 June 1844, the Oregon provisional government created Clatsop County, which in 1846 had a population of 95, 462 in 1850 and 498 in 1860. The 1850 census recorded the population of Astoria as 250. The first church in Astoria, the Methodist Episcopal, was constructed in 1853 and in 1856, Astoria – "the wildest town on the West Coast" – became incorporated.

In 1850 Congress passed the Donation Land Claim Act by offering settlers 320 acres for single men and 640 for married couples. On 14 Feb. 1859, Oregon became the 33rd state in the Union. The *Astoria Marine Gazette* was the first newspaper in 1864; John West built the first cannery in Clatsop County in 1869 and in 1870 Astoria's population was 639 and the county's 1,255 (765 males and 490 females). In 1911, Astoria celebrated its Centennial and in 2011, its Bicentennial. With a population of 10,000, Astoria is an important city at the Pacific Coast. For Astoria's detailed history see: Karen L. Leedom: *Astoria An Oregon History*.

JOHN JACOB ASTOR: DATES

1713 27 June: Felix Astor (9 Nov 1693 in Nußloch - 10 Aug 1765 in Walldorf) marries widow Eva Dorothea Kreh (26 May 1686 - 21 Feb 1725) in Walldorf, youngest of five children is Johann Jacob (1724-1816); Felix has 16 more children with his second wife

1749 15 Apr: Johann Jacob Astor (7 July 1724 - 18 Apr 1816) marries Maria Magdalena vom Berg (20 July 1730 in Ittlingen - 1 May 1764) in Walldorf; youngest of six children is Johann Jacob (1763-1848); his father has six more children by his second wife

1763 17 July: Johann Jacob Astor born in Walldorf, Palatinate, Germany; baptism on 19 July in the Reformed Church

1764 1 May: Death of mother Maria Magdalena vom Berg (*20 June 1730, Lutheran)

1766 8 July: Astor's father Johann Jacob (*7 July 1724, Reformed) remarries in Walldorfs Reformed Church Christina Barbara Seibold (*20 Feb 1742 in Wiesloch, Lutheran)

1768: Brother Georg Peter (* 28 Apr 1752) goes to London

1770: Brother Heinrich (Henry) Johann (*9 Jan 1754) goes as Hessian soldier to NYC

1777 Eastern: Astor is confirmed in the Reformed Church; he assists his father in his trade as butcher

1779 Spring: Astor leaves Walldorf for brother George in London

1783 Nov: Astor leaved England from Bristol on board *North Carolina* bound for Baltimore

1784 24 Mar: Arrival in NYC; meets brother Henry

1784 April: Streetpedlar for German-am. Baker George Dietrich (3 weeks); "apprenticeship" with fur trader Robert Bowne

1784: Acquaintance with fur trader William Backhouse

1785 April: First travel to acquire furs

1785 19 Sept: Marriage with Sarah Todd (*1762; daughter of his landlady Sarah Todd) in NYC; her dowry is equivalent of \$300 plus important family-ties to influential NYC-families

1786 22 May: Opening of own shop for musical instruments

1787: Meeting with trapper Alexander Henry from Montreal

1788: Birth of first child daughter Magdalen (died 1832)

1788 28 Oct: First sale of pelts

1789 28 Feb: A's naturalization in NYC

1789 18 May: First real estate purchase
1790: Birth of 2nd child Sarah († after birth)

1791: Birth of 3rd child John Jacob II (imbecile; † 1869)

1791: Purchase of first own house 40 Little Dock Street (renamed Water Street) for \$8,500

1792: Birth of 4th child William Backhouse (died 1875)

1794: Portrait by prominent-artist Gilbert Stuart

1794 17 Nov: Travel to Europe

1795: Birth 5th child Dorothea (d. 1853)

1797: Birth of 6th child Henry (d. 1799)

1800 29 Apr: Start trade with China

1800: Astor has capital of \$250,000

1801: Birth of 7th child Eliza (†1838)

1802: Birth of 8th child (son dies at birth)

1802: Purchase and move to 223 Broadway, corner Vesey Street

1803: Purchase of ship *Beaver* for China-trade

1804 25 May: Purchase of ship *Severn*

1807: Daughter Magdalen marries Adrian Bentson (Governor of Danish West Indies); divorce 1819

1808: Son William Backhouse studies in Heidelberg; since 1810 in Göttingen

1809 15 Nov: Stepmother Christina

Barbara dies in Walldorf

1812: Astor's daughter Dorothea marries English Walter Langdon against her father's wishes

1813: Death of brother George Peter

1816 18 Apr: Death of Astor's Father Johann Jacob in Walldorf

1816 8 June: Partnership with son William Backhouse; new firm's name: John Jacob Astor & Son

1819 June until Apr 1834: Several journeys to Europe

1820 9 Mar: Daughter Magdalen marries John Bristed; her son Charles becomes Astor's favorite grandson

1821 2 June: Travel with Eliza and John Jacob II to Europe; after 6 months sick son returns to NYC; Eliza remained for a year in Paris where she meets Vincent von Rumpff

1822 King Wilhelm I of Württemberg offers Astor to be Consul in NYC (he declines)

1823 June: Astor and Eliza in Europe

1825 10 Dec: Eliza marries Count Vincent von Rumpff (dowry \$330,000)

1826-34: Investment of \$400,000 in real estate

1829: Brother Johann Melchior (*31 Oct 1759) dies at Neuwied, Germany

1832 Summer: Last trip to Europe for health reasons, return Apr 1834

1832: Death of daughter Magdalen and half-sister Elisabeth (*30 Sept 1773, married to John Gottlieb Wendel)

1833: Death of childless brother Henry

in NYC (leaves 1-Mio-\$ estate to nephew William Backhouse)

1834 27 Mar: Wife Sarah (*1762) dies 8 days before his return from Europe

1834 4 Apr: Return from Europe; leaves 2 months later as partner of American Fur Co; building of *Astor House*, "the most luxurious hotel of ist day"

1835-1848: Investment of more than \$832,000 in Manhattan real estate

1836: Washington Irving publishes his 3-volume *Astoria*

1836: Astor's first draft of Last Will

1838: Purchase of house on 9th Ave and 14th Street for son John Jacob II

1839 22 Aug: 3. Codicil to Will: \$400,000 for Astor-Library

1839: Grandson John Jacob III (1822-90) studies in Göttingen

1848 29 Mar: Astor dies in NYC

1848 Apr: Buried St. Thomas churchyard Broadway/Houston Street

1850: Opening of Last Will, in 5th Codicil \$50,000 for orphanage and old-age-home in Astor's hometown Walldorf

1851: 20 Jun: Graves removed to Trinity Church cemetery Broadway/153rd Street, because of fire and need for land

ASTOR AND ASTORIA

1792 11 May: Capt. Robert Gray sails into and names the Columbia and established the US-claim to the region

1804-1806: After the Louisiana-Purchase of 1803 President Thomas

Jefferson dispatches the Lewis & Clark Expedition to investigate the newly acquired territory; the expedition reaches Pacific coast at the Columbia in late 1805, builds Fort Clatsop and winters there for 106 days until 22 March 1806

1806: John Jacob Astor (1763-1848) becomes interested in the expedition, pays Lewis \$1,000 for information and plans to establish a fur post

1806 6 Apr: Founding of American Fur Company in NYC

1810 23 June: Pacific Fur Company founded in NYC to establish a trading post at the Pacific coast

1810 8 Sept: Astor's ship *Tonquin* with Captain Jonathan Thorn leaves NYC, sights Hawaii 10 Feb 1811; anchors at Honolulu 21 Feb

1811 22 Mar: *Tonquin* reaches mouth of the Columbia and sails upstream

1811 11 Apr: Expedition builds Fort

1811 18 May: Fort is named *Astoria*

1811 5/6 June: *Tonquin* with crew of 23 plus one Indian interpreter gets at Clayoquot Sound near Vancouver Island into fights with Indians, all but one are killed; the ship's clerk Lewis blows up the *Tonquin*

1812 Jan/Feb: Land-Expedition under Wilson Price Hunt reaches Astoria

1812 May: Astor's *Beaver* in Astoria

1812 18 June: War of 1812 breaks out between USA and Great Britain

1813 16 Oct: Fort Astoria is sold under duress to British North West Company

for \$58,000

1813 12 Dec: Fort Astoria is renamed Fort George by Capt. William Black of warship *Raccoon* for British king

1814 Apr: British ship *Isaac Todd* brings first governor of Fort George, Donald McTavish

1818 6 Oct: Fort George is returned to USA by Treaty of Ghent but name remains until 1830s

1818 20 Oct: Treaty establishes joint US-British occupancy of territory west of continental divide to Pacific Ocean

1821-1825: Fort George is HQ of the North West Co. which merges in 1821 into the Hudson's Bay Co

1824: U.S. and Russia agree to 50° as southern boundary for Russian interest

1825-1829: Fort George is practically abandoned (new British HQ is Fort Vancouver); Archibald MacDonald in charge of Fort George

1830-1848: Hudson's Bay Co reoccupies the fort on small scale

1834 June: Astor withdraws as partner of the American Fur Co.

1830s mid: James Birnie in charge of the Fort until 1845

1836: Washington Irving publishes his 3-volume *Astoria*, which he wrote as Astor's guest in the only still existing building in NYC, where Astor was living: Colonades (334 Lafayette Street)

1846 15 June: Oregon Treaty ends the Oregon Boundary Dispute; Britain cedes all right to mainland south of 49th North

1911: Astoria celebrates its Centennial

1961: Astoria celebrates its Sesquicentennial; guest of honor was John Jacob Astor V, 2. Baron Astor of Hever, accompanied by his wife Violet, his son Gavin and Lady Irene and their son John Jacob Astor VIII

1966 17 July: Founding of the City-Partnership Astoria-Walldorf on Astor's 200th birthday in Walldorf by Astoria's Mayor Harry M. Steinbock and Walldorf's Mayor Wilhelm Willinger

2011: Astoria celebrates its Bicentennial

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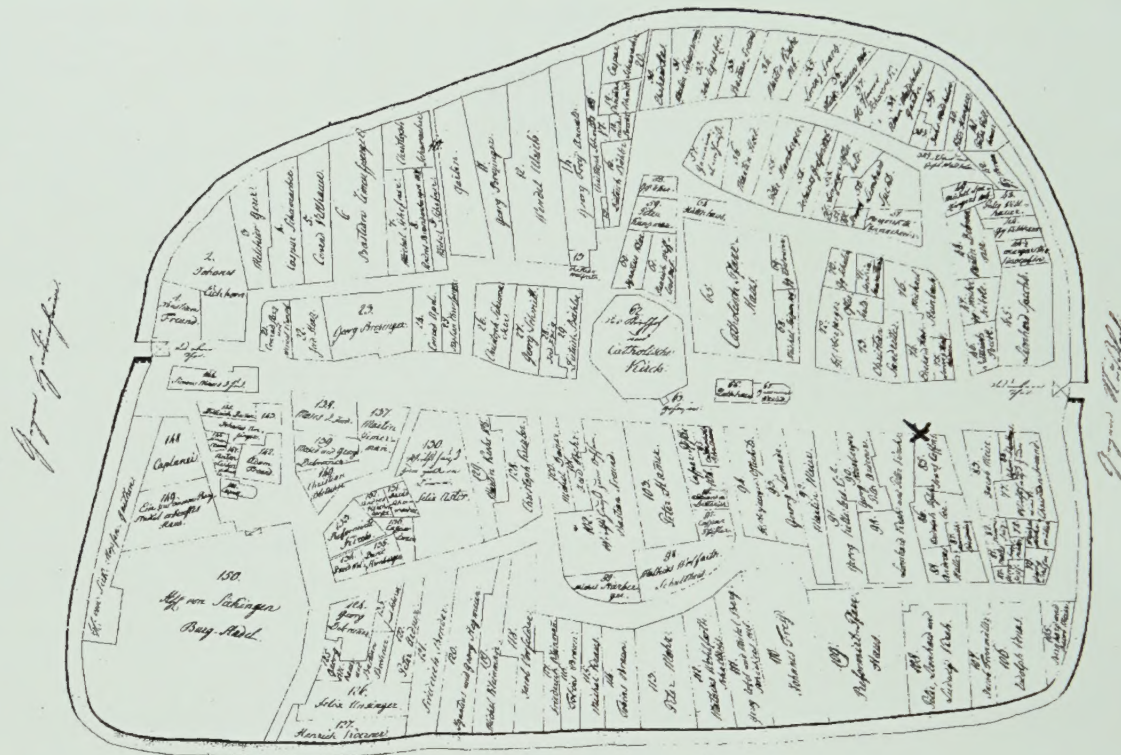
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Walldorf's Village Plan of 1745

Owner of building Nr. 85 (x) in the plan of 1745 was Franz Coffins –
 The property was probably a wedding-present by Felix Astor to his son Johann Jacob,
 who on 15 April 1749 married the Lutheran innkeeper's daughter Maria Magdalena vom Berg from Ittlingen
 in Walldorf's Reformed church